

"Chateau-sur-Mer"

(Wetmore House)

Bellevue Avenue between Shepard and Leroy Avenues

Newport

Newport County

Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-313

HABS
RI,
3-NEWP,
59-

PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey

National Park Service

Department of the Interior

Washington, D. C. 20240

HABS
RI,
3-New?
59

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-313

"CHATEAU-SUR-MER" (WETMORE HOUSE)

Location: Bellevue Avenue between Shepard and Leroy Avenues

Present Owner: The Preservation Society of Newport County

Present Occupants: Caretaker

Present Use: Museum house

Significance: "Chateau-sur-Mer", its lodge, entrance arch, and greenhouse were built in 1851-1852 by the Newport contractor Seth C. Bradford for William Shepard Wetmore, merchant in the China trade. His son, George Peabody Wetmore, greatly enlarged the house in successive major campaigns in the 1870s and 1880s under Richard Morris Hunt, with interior decoration by Luigi Frullini. Wetmore further developed the outbuildings and grounds. His daughters, Edith and Maude Wetmore, maintained the house in proper style until their deaths. The estate was sold at auction in 1969 to The Preservation Society of Newport County.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

The building is located in Plat 36, Lot 33. The following is an incomplete chain of title from Newport City Clerk's Records for the city of Newport. Reference is to number and volume of the Land Evidence Books, LEB.--, p.--)

1851 Deed of July 24, 1851, recorded in LEB. 29, pp.40-41.

From: Mary E. Hazard
To: William S. Wetmore
For: \$3,796.69

"...a parcel of land...Northerly on land of Enoch Hazard, four hundred and fifty-nine feet, Easterly on land of William Beach Lawrence, four hundred and eighty-four feet, Southerly on land of the heirs of Nathaniel L. Ruggles decd., four hundred and sixty-two feet, and Westerly on other land of this grantor, hereinafter described and granted, four hundred and ninety-eight feet...Also, one

other piece or parcel... Easterly on the above described and granted premises, Southerly on land of the heirs of Nathaniel S. Ruggles, decd., Westerly on land now or late of James H. Van Alen, and Northerly on land of Enoch Hazard, containing by estimation about four acres of land... The same being a part of that part of the Coggeshall Farm, late belonging to my father Thomas G. Hazard..."

1851 Deed of July 25, 1851, recorded in LEB. 29, pp.52-53.

From: James H. Van Alen
To: William S. Wetmore
For: \$4,300.00

"... a certain piece or parcel of land, with the stable thereon standing...containing four acres of land more or less,...beginning at the Northwesterly corner of the herein granted and described parcel of land, and at the Northeast corner of a driftway of thirty feet in the width, which driftway runs Easterly from the road which leads from Spring Street into Coggeshall Neck, from thence across the head of said driftway Southerly thirty feet to the Southwest corner of said driftway, thence again Southerly in a straight line four hundred and eighty-nine feet, along the Easterly line of the land lately conveyed to Allyne Otis by Mary E. Hazard thence turning Easterly along the Northerly line of land of the heirs of Nathaniel S. Ruggles decd. three hundred and forty-one feet, thence turning Northerly along the Westerly line of land of Mary E. Hazard, five hundred and ten feet to land of Enoch Hazard, three hundred and forty-one feet to place of beginning..."

1851 Deed of November 17, 1851, recorded in LEB. 29, pp. 259-260.

From: Allyne Otis
To: William S. Wetmore
For: \$3,569.11

"...a piece or parcel of land... Easterly on land of said William S. Wetmore this grantee, four hundred and eighty-eight feet, Southerly on land of the heirs of Nathaniel S. Ruggles decd. three hundred fourteen feet, Westerly on land of George B. Hazard five hundred and twenty feet, and Northerly on a driftway running Easterly from Spring Street, three hundred and four feet, containing three acres..."

1860 Probate of December 20, 1860, recorded in the Probate Record Book 21, pp.295-299.

From: William S. Wetmore
To: George Peabody Wetmore
By: Last will and testament

1921 Probate of October 10, 1921, recorded in the Probate Record Book 83, p.93.

From: George Peabody Wetmore
To: Maude A. K. Wetmore and Edith Malvina K. Wetmore
By: Last will and testament

1951 Probate of November 29, 1951, recorded in the Probate Record Book 123, p.577.

From: Maude A. K. Wetmore
To: Edith Malvina K. Wetmore
By: Last will and testament

1969 Deed of September 27, 1969, recorded in LETB. 228, pp.489-496.

From: Executors and trustees of Edith Malvina K. Wetmore
To: The Preservation Society of Newport County
For: \$115,050.00

"...same premises devised to Maude A. K. Wetmore and Edith Malvina K. Wetmore under last will and testament of George Peabody Wetmore, decd..."

2. Date of erection: 1851-1852

3. Architect: Seth C. Bradford

4. Builder: Seth C. Bradford

5. Original plans: None known

6. Alterations and additions: About 1867, George Peabody Wetmore added a billiard room to the estate. Located a short distance to the east of the Chateau, the building was similar in its architectural character to Bradford's design for the porter's lodge. Although the structure was reputed to cost \$7,000, it was removed, for it does not appear in the 1876 Atlas of Newport. In 1869, Richard Morris Hunt designed the first of many alterations and additions to the estate. That year a stone wall 110 feet long on the west boundary was erected at the reported cost of \$11,000. By 1873, the terminal date given by Mrs. Hunt for the commission, Hunt had probably completed the first great expansion of the house. The service wing to the north was gutted, then enlarged by pushing out a square cornered bay on the north and another on the west to create the billiard room. Between the billiard room and the grand stair case to the east which led from the new porte-cochere, Hunt inserted a chimney. Originally the dining room, the room to the north of the west entrance became the library. The stair hall and study to the east were opened to create the large three story hall with balconies and skylight. Further expansion of the house to the east permitted an enlarged dining room and new service areas to fill out the

block of the enlarged building. Hunt also altered the exterior appearance by remodelling the original west entrance and changing Bradford's hipped mansard roof with a concave lower slope to a steeper and higher mansard with a sheet metal pseudo-cornice. To the east of the grand stair case, Hunt located a square tower containing a newel service stair. On the second floor, the area above the billiard room provided space for three rooms and two baths. Above the new dining room were located two new nursery rooms. The ceiling heights of these new rooms corresponded to those established in the original portion of the house. The lower ceilings of the service area permitted an additional level to be inserted. An elaborate kitchen was installed in the basement. The carpenters for most of this work were Simmons and Wilbour. Stephen S. Albro was the mason. Luigi Frullini of Florence was responsible for the decoration and carving in the dining room and library. Begun in 1872, these two rooms were completed between 1876 and 1877 at a reported cost of \$6,000 per room. The third story in the northwest corner of the house contained guest rooms and servant quarters after this remodelling. Sometime between 1873 and about 1890, Hunt added another story above the dining room wing. He pushed the mansard up to the same height as the roof over his staircase, giving space at the top for two large trunk rooms above the nurseries. Alterations have been reported for the years 1878, 1879, and 1880. The enlarged entertaining facilities required that the basement be reorganized and tiled. At this time the pantry and china closet were refinished in cherry.

Improvements to the stables were made in 1883 according to designs by George C. Mason and Son, with S.S. Albro, mason, and William F. Wilbour, carpenter. The reported cost was \$25,000. In 1903, Mr. Wetmore had a young relative, Ogden Codman, redecorate the southwest ground floor of the original house, the green room, to the style of Louis XV. Probably at this time or earlier, the dressing room of the suite over the ballroom was given a panelled, Colonial Revival fireplace wall with old Dutch tiles. After the original entrance was abandoned, John Russell Pope was commissioned to extend Hunt's revised west entrance to a square bay window. The triple window above was changed to a double motif with French doors opening onto the flat roof of the expanded bay. Also in 1914, Pope paved the recessed area way around the north and west sides of the billiard room with tile and enclosed the space with a granite balustrade. At some later date than 1914, the northeast area way was tiled and given a balustrade to match the one by Pope. Initially Hunt provided both a dumbwaiter from his original kitchen to the pantry and a luggage lift running through all five levels of his service wing. When the luggage lift became an elevator, probably in 1914, and the kitchen and servant's hall were exchanged, the space once taken in the pantry by the dumbwaiter became the silver vault.

7. Important old views: There are numerous photographs, drawings, and lithographs of the house and estate from the time of its construction in the collections of the Newport Historical Society. The collection of material received by The Preservation Society of Newport County has been catalogued by Paul L. Veeder. A copy of this twenty-one page catalogue, "Inventory: Drawings, Renderings and Photographs of Chateau-sur-Mer, Bellevue Avenue, Newport, Rhode Island," is also on file at the Newport Historical Society.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Initially in 1850, William S. Wetmore purchased several acres of the Gibbs land on Old Beach Road. It was reported in the Newport Mercury, October 25, 1850, that he intended to erect a house of Fall River granite, 150 feet by 72 feet, three stories high with a long, two story wing. The drawing room was to be 24' x 43', the oval dining room, 22' x 36', the hall, 20' x 56', and another room 20' square. However, after a serious fire March 11, 1851, James Van Alen halted construction on the Bellevue Avenue brownstone house he had commissioned Seth C. Bradford to build. On July 25, 1851, William S. Wetmore purchased this property, the site of the present chateau, on which a stable had been completed. Shortly after the completion of the new Fall River granite house, William S. Wetmore gave a "fête champêtre" for his life-long friend George Peabody of London. It was quoted as "probably the greatest affair of the kind ever given in this country. Over 10,000 guests were said to have been present." The New York Times estimated those present at 2,500. Pavilions for eating, drinking, and dancing were set up in the gardens and music was played by the German Musical Society. The "Card of Refreshments" included wood-cocks, partridges, lobsters and crabs, pâté de foie gras, oysters, ice cream, meringues, puddings, fruits of all sorts including black Hamburg grapes from the Wetmore greenhouse, champagne, Madeira, and Amontillado. This party was a model for the competitive entertainment of Newport after the Civil War.

Annie Derby Rogers Wetmore, the daughter of William S. Wetmore, married William Watts Sherman. H. H. Richardson's famous house (RI-342) was designed for her. It is located on property which was originally part of the estate of "Chateau-sur-Mer." It was this portion of the estate which extended to the sea. After the death of Edith Wetmore, in 1968, the Parke-Bernet Galleries conducted an auction of the furnishings, September 16-18, 1969.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

- Records of Deeds in Newport City Hall
Probate Records in Probate Court, Newport City Hall.
- Howland, Catherine Clinton, The Richard Morris Hunt Papers.
Edited by Alan Burnham. Unpublished manuscript in the
American Architectural Archive.
- Pitman, Margery: Margery Deane Newspaper Clippings, 1869-
1871. pp. 40, 41, 72. Newport Historical Society.
- Richardson, George C. George C. Richardson Notebook #989.
Newport Historical Society.
- Russell, Charles Handy. Charles Handy Russell (1796-1884)
Scrapbook. Vol. VII, p.140. Newport Historical Society.
- Veeder, Paul L., II. "Inventory: Drawings, Renderings and
Photographs of Chateau-sur-Mer, Bellevue Avenue, Newport,
Rhode Island." Unpublished manuscript in the Preservation
Society of Newport County. Copy in the Newport Historical
Society.
- Drawings of Richard Morris Hunt in the Library, American
Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C.
- Drawings of Charles Salagnad in the Cooper Union Museum,
New York City.

2. Secondary and published sources:

- Ames, Winslow. "The Transformation of Chateau-sur-Mer."
Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians,
XXIX (December, 1970), 291-306.
- Downing, Antoinette F. and Scully, Vincent J., Jr.
The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island.
2nd. ed. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1967.
- Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. Rhode Island Architecture.
Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute Of Technology
Press, 1968.
- Mason, George C. Newport and Its Cottages. Boston:
James R. Osgood and Co. 1875.
- Newport Daily News, September 19, 1850.
- _____, June 9, 1876

Newport Journal, July 14, 1870.

Newport Mercury, October 25, 1850.

_____, March 15, 1851.

_____, May 15, 1852.

_____, July 9, 1853.

_____, May 8, 1869.

_____, November, 20, 1869.

_____, December 2, 1871.

_____, January 4, 1872.

_____, May 3, 1873.

_____, May 9, 1874.

_____, June 8, 1878.

_____, October 16, 1880.

_____, May 7, 1881.

_____, November 12, 1881.

_____, January 13, 1883.

_____, July 26, 1884.

_____, January 17, 1885.

"Sale Catalogue, Number 2888." Parke-Bernet Galleries.
September 16-18, 1969.

Veeder, Paul L, II. "The Outbuildings and Grounds of Chateau-sur-Mer." Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XXIX (December, 1970), 307-17.

3. Likely sources not yet investigated:

Office records of Richard Morris Hunt.
Office records of Seth C. Bradford.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The ruggedness and almost crushing scale of its walls of rough cut Fall River granite set "Chateau-sur-Mer" apart from the gentler villas of the day. This building represents a turning point in the swing from villa to chateau, to the palaces that climaxed the sequence of Newport building. Marked by its stern almost forbidding aspect, it is one of the great architectural monuments in a city filled with structures which represent definitive statements in American architectural development.
2. Condition of fabric: As a house museum, the interior is generally in excellent condition. The exterior walls are well maintained, but the metal pseudo-cornice requires attention.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Original structure approximately 64' x 64' with a 28' x 36' service ell to the north; enlarged to an irregular plan of 100' by 108' with porte-cochère projecting 30 feet on the north; three to four stories.
2. Foundations: The foundations are of brick and stone faced with Fall River granite on the exterior.
3. Wall construction: The random ashlar walls are of Fall River granite.
4. Structural system: The original portions of the house have a masonry structural system. Later additions are masonry and wooden with supplemental iron supports.
5. Chimneys: There are ten chimneys. Originally brick, the chimneys were encased with stone prior to 1914.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: The original entrance on the west facade was enclosed by glass windows in 1914 by John Russell Pope. Added in 1872, by Richard Morris Hunt, the north entrance has two leaf oak doors which fold into reveals in the vestibule walls. There are two service entrances to the basement on the east side of the house.
 - b. Windows: Most windows are double hung with one or two lights. There are eight French windows opening to the porch on the south facade. W. J. McPherson Company, Boston, supplied the stained glass for the windows on the two intermediate landings in Hunt's stair tower.

7. Roof: Covered in slate, the steeply pitched mansard is framed at the top by a 2 1/2' high pseudo-cornice of sheet metal which is decorated with rosettes and corner anthemia. The height of the pseudo-cornice conceals the low pitch of the upper slope of Hunt's mansard. There are two different heights to the roof. The towers above the west entrance and the newel service stair have separate roof elements. A square steeple marks the square tower containing the newel service stair, while the roof treatment of the west tower is identical with the remainder of the roof. The highest mansard, about 4' 9" above the rest of the roof, is T-shaped in plan and covers the north stair tower, the tapestry hall, and the dining room. A portion of this area has a concave basin to catch water for the cistern in the sub-basement. The cornice, which is topped by a plain sheet metal flashing, has boldly projecting modillions of two designs. While Hunt's modillions of the 1872 enlargement differ slightly in their detailing from Bradford's on the west tower, they are of the same Fall River granite. There are numerous dormers on the steeply pitched mansard.
8. Porches, stoops, and bulkheads: The porch extends from the west tower along the south facade to the dining room on the east. A hipped, gambrel roof with a concave lower slope is supported by wooden posts with plain capitals and bases. Six skylights in the porch floor provide illumination to the basement areas below.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: Entering from the porte-cochère on the north, one proceeds up a short flight of eight low steps to the main floor. Diagonally ahead is located the three story hall with skylight and balconies. From this hall doors lead to the dining room on the east, the ballroom on the south, the marble hall to the southwest the library on axis with the dining room to the west, and the billiard, now morning room, at the northwest corner of the house. The green parlor is south of the marble hall, which contained the original entrance to the west. In the northeast corner of the house between the dining room and the stairs are located the butler's pantry and china closet. The five bathrooms, ten bedrooms, day nursery, sitting room, and servant quarters are similarly arranged about the tapestry hall and the skylighted hall above Bradford's marble hall. Access to the basement is gained by two exterior entrances on the east. The newel service stair to the east of the grand stair connects the basement with the five levels of the service area. Below the butler's pantry and china closet are located the servants' hall and main service entrance. To the south, under the dining room and porch are located the kitchen, two pantries, and the scullery with the secondary access to the exterior. Below the green parlor and the south end of the ballroom are located the southwest and southeast wine rooms. A boot room is below the library. The laundry and ironing room is under the billiard room.

The heating plant and coal storage bins were located under the original entrance hall and Hunt's porte-cochère and grand stair case. The storage for sherry and hard liquor was located behind the windowless entresol between the third story and the dormered roof of the west tower.

2. First floor rooms;

- a. Hall and stairway: The open well double stairway rises three stories over the entrance. The Eastlake woodwork of the wainscoting has stiles which rise above the top rails. The soffit of the stairway is painted on each side of a central rib with foliage which strays at the landings into trellis work. At the top of the well this pattern develops into a complex radial circumferential trellis with birds and blue sky. Charles Salagnad painted a pseudo-tapestry on canvas for the walls of the first floor flights. On the next two flights and on all the walls of the three story hall there is a tapestry-like wallpaper. At the foot of the stairs, the exterior double doors of the vestibule to the porte-cochère are made to "disappear" as wall panels in the upper portion of the leaves. Bronze figures signed by the French foundry of Guillaumin stand atop the newel posts. At the five landings, there are gas and electric lighting fixtures with cherubs. Four octagonal, lantern shaped chandeliers hang from the corners of the opening in the ceiling. Between the ceiling of the stairway and the actual mansard roof is the top layer of servant bedrooms. The hall, known as the tapestry hall, although no tapestry has ever hung from its walls, is an enlarged development of the internal upstairs hall of Bradford's original house. The height of the hall is exaggerated visually by the broadening of the ascending balconies. The center opening thus becomes smaller. The ceiling panel of colored glass covers a lightwell which was equipped with gas jets for night illumination. Rack and pinion devices on the panel enabled the whole hall to be ventilated through the skylight. Marble is used for the entrance floor and stairs. Oak strips in a herringbone pattern are the flooring in the hall and stairway. The balconies on the second and third floors have lanterns at the corners of the balustrades similar in style to those in the stairway. Minton tiles decorate the fireplace in the hall. The tiles of the surround have caricatures of fish and dogs. Red tiles with a black design decorate the hearth and interior of the fireplace. There are bookcases with glass doors on the east and west walls of the hall.
- b. Billiard room: The oak woodwork in the Eastlake manner of the stairs and hall is continued in what is now called the morning room. Ash is used for the panelling. There are entrances to the room from the stair hall, the tapestry hall, and the library. The fireplace on the east wall is flanked by two doors. The south door opens to the stair hall. A lavatory, originally

for male guests, is located behind the north door. This is the only lavatory on the ground floor. Of the two doors in the west wall, the right leads into the library and the left opens to the tapestry hall. Glazed bookcases replace the wainscoting on the south, west, and north walls, but retain the projecting stile motif of the hall and stair case. The chimney breast is 12' 9" wide and decorated with Minton tiles. There are three tiles with geometric designs separating four tiles of the seasons, each with a single female head. The tiles on the interior of the fireplace are decorated with pussy willows. A richly articulated mantel is topped by a large mirror framed by abstracted architectural detailing. The billiard room ceiling is divided by false beams which converge at the center. The original droplights similar in design to the remaining wall sconces have been removed. Two iron beams are hidden in the ceiling to carry the load. The projecting window bays in the north and west walls have large, double hung windows of single light sashes with louvered shutters which fold into reveals. Beneath each window is a seat with storage areas. A low, segmental arch supported by fluted, engaged columns flanked by abstractly detailed pilasters of ash, and drapery rods frame the window bays and the doors on the south wall. The floor is of oak strips laid in a herringbone pattern. Hunt designed the furniture for the room. The billiard table is no longer part of the ensemble.

- c. Library: Luigi Frullini, a Florentine decorator, was responsible for the decorations and the furnishings in the library and dining room. Although the room was not completed until late 1876, the date 1873 is carved into a pilaster over the built-in writing desk located in the center of the south wall. Italian-American references, the names of Colombo and Amerigo, are also carved into the pilasters flanking the desk. To either side of the desk are doors opening to the marble hall. Opposite the desk on the north wall is the fireplace with a tile surround. Renaissance pilasters with arabesques in low relief frame the walls and the architectural elements of the room. The elaborate carved ceiling of false beams is also executed in walnut. A vine motif surrounds the elaborate designs of the parquet floor. To the right of the fireplace, one of the bookcases was built to swing out and form a door to the billiard room. The walls are covered with an embossed wallpaper with designs based on abstract floral patterns. Two double hung windows with single lights per sash fill the window bay in the west wall. A two leaf door with panelling is centered in the east wall, opening to the tapestry hall on axis with the dining room to the east.

- d. Dining room: The sliding, double entrance doors centered on the west wall are mirrored. Sliding mirrored panels also cover all windows. The large walnut built-in serving tables with caryatid supports and silver display areas flank this entrance. On the south wall, a similarly designed sideboard with marble top and majolica plaque depicting a hunter is set between two French windows opening to the terrace and veranda. The fireplace in the north wall has a majolica tile surround depicting a deer hunting scene signed E. Gluck, 1876. A curved walnut overmantel is carved with Bacchic cherubs and bunches of grapes in a pyramidal grouping. The high, heavily carved and molded wainscoting with gilded and stamped, poly-chrome leather above covers the walls. A blind door to the right of the fireplace leads to the butler's pantry. The oval, stretched canvas ceiling painting by Annibale Gatti depicting cherubs offering food and drink is framed by a heavily molded walnut ceiling. Folded louvered shutters cover the windows in the east bay. The parquet floor has an elaborate inlaid design. Eight triple globe wall sconces illuminate the room.
- e. Ballroom: Located to the south of Hunt's tapestry hall, the ballroom was altered in its decor when Hunt enlarged the house. A large marble mantelpiece centered on the east wall, has boldly projecting moldings. The plaster moldings of the wall panels are highlighted by carved and gilt floral motifs. These moldings and the two chandeliers appear to be the alterations of the 1870s. Oak parquet flooring of 10" x 20" rectangles is laid in a herringbone pattern with square border trim. A large gilt framed mirror extends from the fireplace mantel to the ceiling. The plaster walls have a deep cove molding and elaborate framing elements highlighted by gilt. Heavy plaster moldings in the ceiling trace the plan of the room. Two plaster rondels mark the location of the chandeliers. The two leaf door opening to the hall folds flush into reveals. The door is finished with full length mirrors on the ballroom side and chamfered wooden detailing on the hall side. The double sliding doors into the green parlor and marble hall are mahogany with six recessed panels per leaf. All are finished with German silver hardware. There are elaborate, heavy architectural entablatures over the doors with the edge surface highlighted by gilt. A walnut veneer faces the outer surface of the doors to the marble hall. The three French windows opening to the veranda have louvered shutters which fold into reveals.
- f. Marble hall: Originally one entered beneath the tower on the west facade into this marble floored hall which connects to the library and tapestry hall on the north, directly east to the ballroom, and right to the green parlor at the southwest corner of the house. Large white marble tiles with small black marble tiles at the intersections are laid in a

diagonal pattern. There is a pierced brass register in the floor from the original heating system. All the wood is walnut. The doorways have heavy moldings topped with heavy entablatures. The plaster walls are painted a dark green above the walnut wainscoting. Near the top of the wall, a wooden molding holds a brass tube railing for the hanging of pictures. Above this railing is a stenciled border of abstract floral designs. The ceiling is divided into three rectangular areas by two heavy wooden beams. Each area has a large center rectangle surrounded by a border of lighter beams. This border is decorated by a rich floral design with geometric edging. The center panel is decorated with an abstract, repetitive pattern. Originally chandeliers hung from the two heavy beams. The French window which opens onto the veranda has louvered shutters which fold into reveals. Opposite the door to the tapestry hall is a single leaf door which would open into the green parlor. This door is false. All other doors in the hall are two leaf with marble sills.

- g. Green parlor: Redecorated in the style of Louis XV in 1903 by Ogden Codman, a Wetmore relative, this southwest corner room has green damask on the walls. The African marble fireplace on the north wall may be original. Tiles of African and white marble are used for the hearth. The interior of the fireplace is faced in cast iron. A smooth cove cornice tops the carved panel work which frames the padded green damask. The plaster ceiling has low relief plaster decoration. French windows with louvered shutters are centered in the south and west walls. Carpeting covers the floor. The wall sconces are electric.
 - h. Service area: The butler's pantry and china closet to the north of the dining room have red and black tile floors. The cabinets and woodwork in the two rooms is of edge grain and quarter sawn cherry. A large silver vault is set in the north wall of the butler's pantry. The plaster walls above the cherry wainscoting is painted a deep red. The double hung windows have iron bars. The gas lighting fixtures have been converted to electricity.
3. Second floor rooms:
- a. Southwest bedroom: Originally Mr. Wetmore's room, this bedroom has a recessed area on the east wall which receives the head of the bed. Flanking the bed are panelled doors. The left door opens to a closet. The right door offers access to Mrs. Wetmore's bedroom to the east. The opening of the recess is decorated with an elaborate architectural frame of turned and incised woodwork painted black with accents of red-orange. A wooden panelled mantelpiece and overmantel of a similar design surround the hearth. The fireback is of red-orange glazed brick. The lower portion of the wall is wainscoted.

A Morris style paper covers the plaster walls and ceiling. The ceiling paper has a border of two rows of alternating black and gold rectangles. Black and gold are also used to highlight the molded plaster ceiling cornice. The double hung windows have louvered shutters which fold into reveals.

- b. Southeast bedroom: Mrs. Wetmore's bedroom has painted plaster walls and ceiling with plaster moldings dividing the wall areas. The parquet floor is of oak strips. The double hung windows have louvered shutters which fold into reveals. On the east wall is a fireplace topped with a heavy molded wooden mantelpiece. In the dressing room to the north, the north wall has been panelled and fitted with a fireplace in Colonial Revival style complete with old blue and white Dutch tiles.
- c. Sitting room: Located above the original entrance, the sitting room has a diagonal marble front fireplace in the southeast corner. French windows open to the roof over the entrance. The plaster walls and ceilings are painted.
- d. West bedroom: Above the present library, this bedroom has painted plaster walls and ceiling. This bedroom, the sitting room to the south, and the other two major bedrooms open from a small galleried hall with skylight. The fireplace in the north wall is of white marble. It contains two gas lines which have been closed. Two double hung windows with louvered shutters which fold into reveals are located in the west wall. The clothes closet in the east wall is cedar lined. A door cut through the original north wall leads to an added dressing room and bath. There is a marble fireplace in the dressing room.
- e. Northwest bedroom: Added in Hunt's first expansion of the house, this suite includes another dressing room and bath. Both the bedroom and the dressing room have wooden fireplaces in the style of the billiard room below. The ceilings of these two rooms are decorated at the corners and along the cove cornices with stenciled abstract floral motifs in geometric patterns.
- f. Bathrooms: There are four bathrooms on the second floor. Two of the three family bathrooms were added by Hunt in 1872. The large bathroom next to Mrs. Wetmore's bedroom has decorative tile flooring. The walls are covered with glazed white tiles laid diagonally. White tiles and wooden trim encase the tub, wash stand, and toilet. The sink has a marble top and bowl. There is a colored glass skylight with openings for ventilation. A door also opens to the original gallery hall. The other two bathrooms are smaller. They have white tile walls and floors. The tubs and sinks are marble.

4. Third floor rooms:

- a. Chambers: There are ten rooms. The walls and ceilings are plaster. In some rooms wallpaper was used, but it has been removed in recent years. The room above the sitting room in the west facade tower has a flowered vine motif along the perimeter of the ceiling. Birds decorate the corners. Cartoons for these designs have been discovered on the walls upon removal of the wallpaper. The floors are plain oak boards. There are four fireplaces, three marble and one wooden. The double hung windows have louvered shutters which fold into reveals.
 - b. Bathrooms: There are two-and-a-half bathrooms. The bathroom above the large bathroom on the second floor also has a colored glass skylight with ventilation. Blue and white tiles are used on the floors and white tiles on the walls.
5. Basement: The treatment of the walls and floors of the service stairway, hall, and servants' dining room is continued from the butler's pantry and china closet. Tile floors and walls were laid in the area ways, kitchen, pantries, scullery, and dining room in 1881. The two wine rooms on the south side of the house are unfinished with dirt floors and stone walls.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Located on the east side of Bellevue Avenue on a large level lot, the house faces west with the present entrance through the porte-cochère on the north.
2. Historic landscape design: The present informal landscaping remains from plans of Olmsted Brothers, Landscape architects, executed shortly before World War I. Early views of the estate show an open lawn with no large plantings. Thus views to the sea were permitted in all directions.
3. Enclosures: The stone wall with granite caps along Bellevue Avenue was erected in 1869-1870 at a reported cost of about \$11,000. There is a rendering of the south entrance gate by Richard Morris Hunt in the Library, American Institute of Architects. The rendering is number 2117-4 in the catalogue of American Architectural Drawings. Previously, in 1860, The Chinese Moon Gate was installed in the wall along Victoria Avenue. This gate served to separate the two portions of the original estate.
4. Outbuildings: The estate in about 1860, contained an entrance arch, porter's lodge, palm house, grapery stables, barn, and billiard room. Still remaining are the entrance arch, porter's lodge, and greatly expanded stables. The eastern portion of the property containing the stables, barn, and added service

building are now owned by Salve Regina College. Completed in 1853, by Seth C. Bradford, the porter's lodge repeated the lines of the original chateau. The palm house and grapery were reported to have required 8000 panes of glass each. These buildings were removed gradually between 1918 and 1921. At this time, the work shop and furnace room for these structures were converted into the present teahouse. Large boxed palm trees, grown in the palm house were rolled onto the lawn in the summer. In 1883, the stables were enlarged at the cost of \$25,000. George C. Mason and Son were the architects, and William F. Wilbour, builder. There are unexecuted plans for even larger stables by the St. Pancras Iron Works, Old Pancras Road, London, England. These plans are in the collection of The Preservation Society of Newport County. The billiard room was removed about 1872, when Hunt's addition was near completion.

Prepared by: Thomas M. Slade
University of Notre Dame
August, 1972
National Park Service

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Newport HABS Project - 1970. Sponsored in cooperation with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Antoinette F. Downing, Chairman. Under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Osmund Overby (University of Missouri), Project Supervisor, Jack E. Boucher, photographer, 1969.